

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 SY-02 A-01 SCCT-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 /037 W

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P R 051550Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WSHDC PRIORITY 3798

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T ALGIERS 0298

LIMDIS

RABAT FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PFOR, AG, US

SUBJECT: SAHARA APPEARS AS POSSIBLE MOTIVE IN CURRENT SECURITY
PROBLEM

1. SITUATION UPDATE: SITUATION REMAINS QUIET.
POLICE LEFT EMBASSY 4 FEB AT 1500 BUT RETURNED IN FULL
FORCE AT 1700 AND STAYED UNTIL ROUGHLY 2000 WHEN MAJORITY
DEPARTED, LEAVING BEHIND AGAIN ONE VAN WITH FOUR
POLICE WHO STAYED THE NIGHT AND STILL THERE AS OF
1200 FEB 5.

2. FELLOW DIPLOMATS AND MILITARY ATTACHES ALL PROFESS
IGNORANCE AS TO WHAT CAUSING CURRENT STIR, AND UNTIL
TODAY, FEB. 5, ABERKANE HAS TURNED AWAY ANY DIRECT
QUESTIONS AS TO WHAT HAS CAUSED CURRENT SITUATION
WITH RESPONSE THAT HE TELLING US ALL HE KNOWS, THAT
INFORMATION IS SPARSE, AND THAT ALGERIAN SECURITY WILL
TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING. REQUEST TO DEPUTY CHIEF
PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY FOR INFORMATION LIKEWISE
STIMULATED NO RESPONSE.

3. DURING CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE FEB 5 ABOUT SECURITY
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FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER'S RETURN BY CAR FROM TUNIS ABERKANE

SAID THAT THERE WAS GROWING RESENTMENT IN ALGERIA AMONG THE ALGERIAN PEOPLE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, AND AS A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT, GOA WAS TAKING APPROPRIATE SECURITY MEASURES. ABERKANE SIAD THIS RESENTMENT WAS NOT SOMETHING GOA WAS CONVEYING TO PEOPLE, BUT THAT ALGERIAN PUBLIC, THROUGH OVERSEAS RADIO AND FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS AND STATEMENTS IN WASHINGTON, KNOW THAT US IS SIDING WITH MOROCCO. HE ADDED THAT "I HAVE CONVEYED WHAT YOU TOLD ME BUT NEWS KEEPS COMING IN ABOUT US AND MOROCCO; I PERSONALLY FEEL IT HERE IN DISCUSSIONS; WE ARE CONVINCED THAT US IS HELPING MOROCCO."

4. CHARGE EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THESE REPORTS OF RESENTMENT AND THAT THIS RESENTMENT COULD REACH PROPORTIONS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE SECURITY MEASURES CURRENTLY UNDERWAY. HE ASKED FOR MEETING WITH ABERKANE AND FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL BENHABYLES TO DISCUSS CURRENT SITUATION, ITS ORIGINS, AND WHAT COULD BE DONE ABOUT IT.

5. ABERKANE SAID IT HAD ALL BEEN DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY, SPECIFICALLY IN EXCHANGES JAN 29 AND JAN 31; ALGERIANS HAD ASKED QUESTIONS, EMBASSY HAD ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS AND ABERKANE HAD FAITHFULLY CONVEYED TO APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF AUTHORITY THESE ANSWERS. GOA NOT INTERESTED IN FURTHER DISCUSSION AT THIS STAGE UNLESS EMBASSY HAD ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO CONVEY.

6. ABERKANE ASSURED CHARGE THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER SHOULD RETURN BY CAR FROM TUNIS AND THAT NOTHING UNUSUAL WOULD HAPPEN; HE CALLED BACK FIVE MINUTES LATER TO REQUEST LICENSE PLATE NUMBER AND VEHICLE DETAILS AND SAID GOA WOULD PASS THIS INFORMATION TO SECURITY WHO WOULD IN TURN PASS IT ON TO POINTS ON AMBASSADOR'S ITINERARY.

7. IN RESPONSE CHARGE'S QUESTIONS, ABERKANE SAID PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR INDIVIDUAL EMBASSY EMPLOYEES NOT NECESSARY, EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT OUR FORMAL
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REQUEST TO HIM YESTERDAY FOR TWO ADDITIONAL POLICEMEN FOR CHARGE'S RESIDENCE HAD NOT BEEN FULFILLED AND SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT. HE SAID WE SHOULD NOT WORRY AND ADDED THAT YESTERDAY HE HAD ARGUED AGAINST PASSING ALONG WORD THAT CHARGE SHOULD PRSONALLY TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF (ALGIERS 279) BECAUSE HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE UNDULY ALARMING, BUT THAT HE HAD BEEN OVERRULED.

8. COMMENT: WE NOT SURE WHETHER WE FACING TERRORIST THREAT,
DEMONSTRATION POSSIBILITY,OR REGIME HARASSMENT.
ABERKANE'S REMARKS TODAY SUGGEST HARASSMENT THEORY
MAY HAVE SOME VALIDITY. WE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT ABERKANE HAS
BEEN OVERRULED TWICE NOW ON QUESTION OF SECURITY, FIRST ON
WHETHER TO PASS WARNING TO EMBASSY AND LATER WHEN, HAVING
DISMISSED AMBASSADOR'S TRIP AS NOT WORTH BEING CONCERNED ABOUT,
HE CALLED BACK TO REQUEST DETAILS AND ASSURE US SECURITY
ELEMENTS WOULD BE NOTIFIED. HE MAY BE SEEKING EXPLOIT OPPORTUNITY
TO PUSH ALGERIAN SAHARA LINE. IN ANY CASE AS LONG AS ALGERIANS
CONTINUE TO TAKE LOCAL SECURITY SITUATION SERIOUSLY, SO WILL WE.
LYNE

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